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SUBJECT: KEEPING OUR PEOPLE SAFE: INSTITUTING PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT  
DRILLS FOR SERVICE IN AFGHANISTAN

¶1. Service in Afghanistan is both physically and mentally challenging. This is particularly true of service in the field - at Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), District Support Teams (DSTs) and at the numerous entities throughout Afghanistan where civilian personnel are co-located with military elements. Rough field conditions necessitate a minimum level of physical fitness for candidates to be able to perform safely and effectively. Failure to attain this minimum level can, in the worst case scenario, mean the difference between life and death and endanger not only the employee, but the troops and civilians serving with the employee, who rightly feel a sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of the entire team. To ensure that employees have the requisite level of fitness to serve safely and effectively in Afghanistan, post strongly urges instituting a mandatory physical assessment test to all USG recruits for service outside of Kabul. The test could be administered as part of the mandatory training class RS510, conducted at Camp Atterbury. Any candidate who fails the test would not be cleared for service outside of Kabul. Additionally, post recommends including a paragraph highlighting the physical demands of service in Afghanistan as part of the Afghanistan Support Office (ASO) recruitment process. See suggested language in para 3.

¶2. The proposed test would mimic real-life conditions in the field. We propose that at the very least it include the following drills:

--The Helicopter Dash and Hop Aboard: In full body armor, candidates will dash 25 meters to board a Blackhawk helicopter staged for take-off. Candidates will be given specific instructions by ground crew and will be expected to follow them safely and expeditiously to board and secure themselves for a rapid takeoff. A reasonable time limit will be set.

--The Jump-in/Jump-out Humvee/MRAP Drill: In full body armor, candidates will run 25 meters, jump into a Humvee or MRAP, strap themselves in and prepare to depart. Then upon instruction, they will quickly jump out of the vehicle and run 25 meters back to the start point. A reasonable time limit will be set.

--The "We've Got To Go NOW" Drill: Candidates are placed in a scenario where they are attending a meeting with their armor taken off. Upon receiving a signal, they must put the armor on as quickly as possible and follow the security force outside to a waiting vehicle. A reasonable time limit will be set.

¶3. Suggested language to be included in the field position job descriptions: Working at a field location in Afghanistan requires frequent engagement in strenuous physical activities in various types of terrain in demanding environments, side by side with military counterparts. Duties involve physical exertion, such as long periods of standing, walking over rough, uneven or rocky surfaces; recurring bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching or similar activities while wearing Individual Body Armor (IBA) and a Kevlar Helmet. It may also be necessary from time to time to carry a backpack with 20 or more pounds of food, water and personal equipment. This position requires the ability to run

short distances while wearing body armor and a Kevlar helmet and the ability to climb in and out of military vehicles such as the Humvee, MRAP and/or military aircraft without assistance. This position may also require walking up and down steep terrain, walking through ravines and dry creek beds, and jumping across gullies, irrigation trenches and furrows, all while wearing Body Armor and a Kevlar Helmet.

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